

Message Text

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TO THOMPSON FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: PRESS STATEMENT ON MOTOR TRAVEL IN SINALOA

1. TEXT OF STATEMENT TO BE RELEASED AT DECEMBER 30 NOON
PRESS BRIEFING FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT. TRAVEL IN THE STATE OF SINALOA, MEXICO. IN
RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
HAS INFORMED THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF RECENT
DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING TOURIST TRAVEL IN THE STATE OF
SINALOA, MEXICO. WHILE LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS HAVE
SAFE AND ENJOYABLE VACATIONS IN MEXICO AND CAN EXPECT
TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE TRADITIONAL MEXICAN HOSPITALITY,
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED
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ABOUT THE SAFETY OF AMERICAN TOURISTS TRAVELING IN OR
THROUGH THE STATE OF SINALOA IN WESTERN MEXICO. THE
DEPARTMENT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ALERT AMERICAN
TRAVELERS TO POTENTIAL RISKS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

SINCE MAY 1976 THERE HAVE BEEN APPROXIMATELY 18 INCIDENTS

INVOLVING HIGHWAY ROBBERY AND VIOLENT ASSAULT OF AMERICAN TRAVELERS BY ARMED BANDITS MOSTLY ON HIGHWAY 15 NEAR THE CITY OF CULIACAN IN THE STATE OF SINALOA. THE BANDITS HAVE GENERALLY TAKEN ALL OF THE MOTORISTS POSSESSIONS INCLUDING

THEIR VEHICLES. TWO MOTORISTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED MISSING. THESE INCIDENTS INCLUDED A MURDER OF A FATHER AND DAUGHTER ON CHRISTMAS DAY ON THE DURANGO-MAZATLAN HIGHWAY.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES. THE OFFICIALS OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT RECENTLY CONVEYED TO UNITED STATES EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN MEXICO CITY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO INSTITUTE NEW MEASURES IMMEDIATELY TO ASSURE TOURISTS' SAFE AND PLEASANT TRAVEL. ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT THERE WILL BE A NEW AND UNIQUE SYSTEM OF TOURIST PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE BORDER AT NOGALES THROUGH HERMOSILLO TO MAZATLAN. THE FEATURES OF THIS SYSTEM INCLUDE HANDOUTS TO TOURISTS AT THE BORDER INDICATING APPROPRIATE PLACES TO STAY AND HOW TO CONTACT MEXICAN AUTHORITIES FOR ASSISTANCE, AND IMMEDIATE INCREASE OF THE PATROLLING 'GREEN ANGEL' TOURIST ASSISTANCE UNITS FROM 5 TO 15.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WELCOMES THESE NEW INITIATIVES AND ANTICIPATES THAT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN CONTROLLING THIS SITUATION. IN THE MEANTIME WE ADVISE AMERICAN MOTORISTS THAT MOTOR TRAVEL THROUGH OR IN THE STATE OF SINALOA IN WESTERN MEXICO ENTAILS SUBSTANTIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RISKS. IF TRAVEL FOR THE TIME BEING IN THAT AREA IS UNAVOIDABLE IT IS ADVISABLE TO HAVE SEVERAL VEHICLES TRAVEL TOGETHER, RESTRICT DRIVING TO THE PERIOD 10:00AM TO 3:00PM AND STAY IN WELL-KNOWN HOTELS. CAMPING OR RESTING ALONG THE HIGHWAY IS NOT ADVISABLE. IN VIEW OF THE STEPS THAT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IS TAKING, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BELIEVES THAT THE SITUATION WILL IMPROVE RAPIDLY. END TEXT.

ROBINSON

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